



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MUSSEL QUARANTINE

VENTURA, California – The Ventura County Environmental Health Division (Division) in coordination with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is issuing a warning that the annual quarantine of mussels taken for human consumption by recreational sport harvesters from the ocean shore of California is effective beginning May 1, 2026. The quarantine is established to protect and preserve the public health under the authority of the California Health and Safety Code.

The quarantine applies to all species of mussels taken by the public anywhere on the California coast including all bays, harbors, and estuaries. Commercially harvested shellfish are not included in the annual quarantine.

By complying with the mussel quarantine and advisory, exposure to Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) and Domoic Acid Poisoning (DAP) can be prevented. PSP affects the central nervous system producing a tingling around the mouth and fingertips within a few minutes to a few hours after eating shellfish that contain PSP toxins. This typically is followed by disturbed balance, lack of muscular coordination, slurred speech, and difficulty swallowing. In severe poisonings, complete muscular paralysis and death from asphyxiation can occur.

Symptoms of DAP can occur within 30 minutes to 24 hours after eating toxic seafood. In mild cases symptoms may include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headache, and dizziness. These symptoms disappear completely within several days. In severe cases the victim may experience excessive bronchial secretions, difficulty breathing, confusion, disorientation, cardiovascular instability, seizures, permanent loss of short-term memory, coma and death.

There is no known antidote to the toxins, and cooking cannot be relied upon to destroy them. Supportive medical care, however, has proven effective in managing the symptoms. Anyone who suspects they are experiencing PSP or DAP symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

Mussels may be sold for use as bait when displayed and sold in containers labeled in boldfaced type with letters at least one-half inch in height as follows:

**MUSSELS FOR BAIT ONLY
UNFIT FOR HUMAN FOOD**

The annual mussel quarantine will be in effect until at least October 31, 2026. The County Environmental Health Division has posted placards in conspicuous places advising the public of the quarantine. The California Department of Public Health has established a Shellfish Information Hotline at 800/553-4133 for additional information on shellfish biotoxin findings and quarantines.

More information about the quarantine, PSP and DAP can be found on the Annual Mussel Quarantine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) webpage:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DRSEM/Pages/EMB/Shellfish/Annual-Mussel-Quarantine.aspx>

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